

Searching 101

How to Search for Responsive Records



Overview

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- [FDPS Case Notes](#)
- [Indexing Guides](#)
- [Sentinel Issues & Helpdesk Information](#)



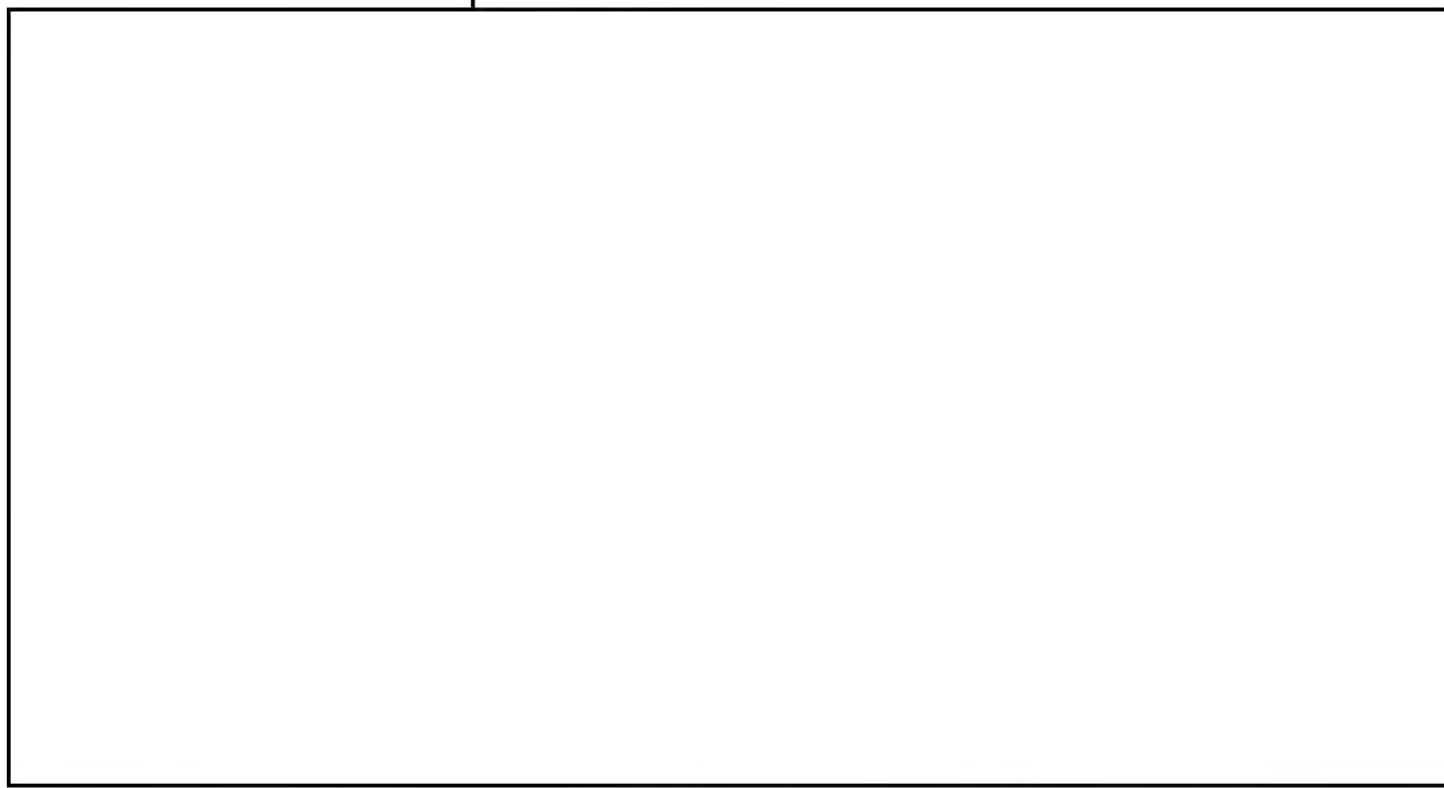
Sentinel Homepage Overview



Sentinel Homepage Overview

Preferences

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Sentinel Homepage Overview

Preferences

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Sentinel Homepage Overview

Searching Options

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Why is Searching performed?



Why is Searching performed?

Searching is performed to determine if any Bureau records are responsive to the person, place, or thing requested.

The type of information requested will help determine whether a search should be limited to just responsive **MAIN** file records or if the search should include responsive **REFERENCE** file records as well.

- All information on Nat King Cole (MAIN file search)
- All information on Kraft (MAIN file search)
- All information about an interview Agent Miller conducted with John Smith on September 1, 2010 in Berkeley, CA (REFERENCE file search).



Searching Reminders

When searching, ensure:

- Correct subject is searched;
- Correct identifying data is used to conduct the search; and/or,
- Correct timeframe and incident are used to ident/eliminate files.



Searching Overview



What is ACS?

Automated Case System (ACS)

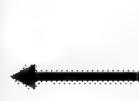
- System used to search for information located within the FBI's Central Records System (CRS) by name through the use of universal index (UNI).
- ACS-UNI was decommissioned on August 1, 2018. Everything that was indexed within this system was migrated into ACS Index which is now accessed through Sentinel.



What is Sentinel?

Sentinel

- Sentinel is a newer system of records.
- Sentinel houses records from July 1, 2012 to the present.



To access Sentinel, double click the *Sentinel Login* icon on your desktop.



What are the Manual Index Cards?

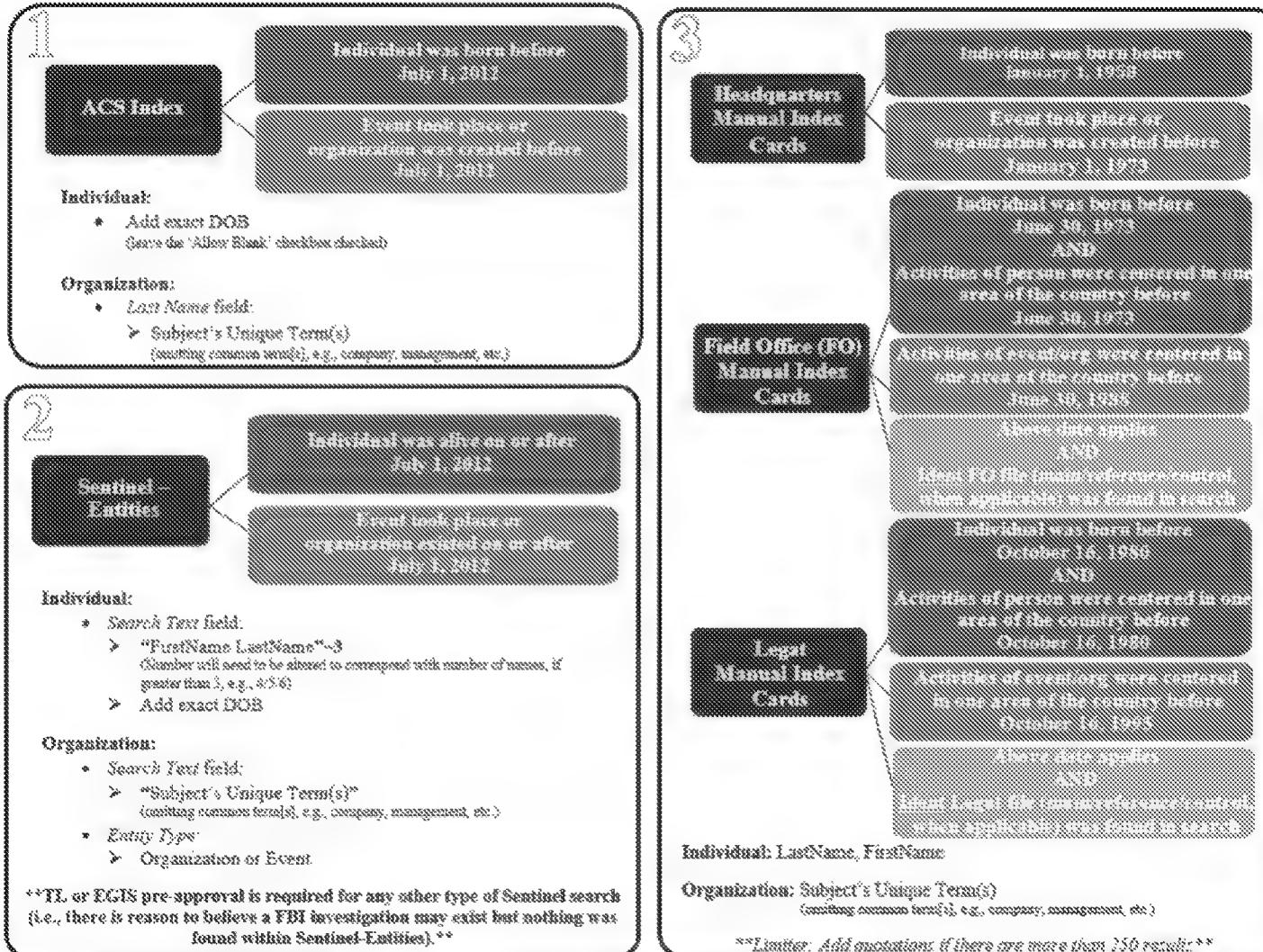
Manual Index Cards

- Prior to ACS-UNI, records were indexed on manual index cards.
- The manual indices house the scanned images of manual index cards.
- All of the HQ, FO, and Legat manual index cards have been scanned and uploaded to a SharePoint site.



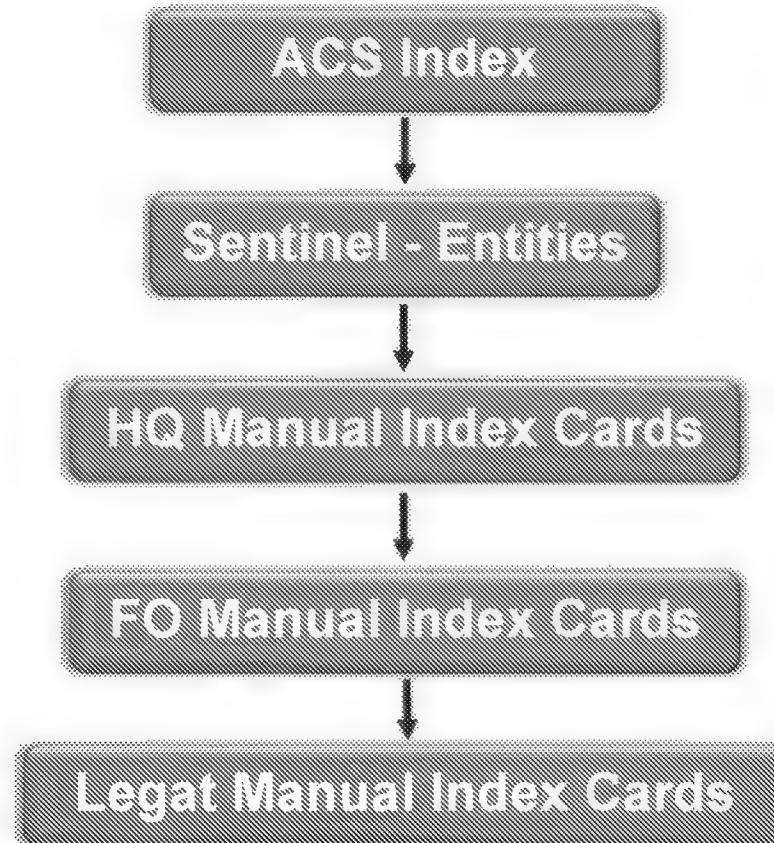
Searching Desk Reference

Searching Desk Reference



Searching Overview

If the dates apply, search the following indices in this order:



*****If the request is in litigation, always coordinate with LSU prior to initiating the search*****

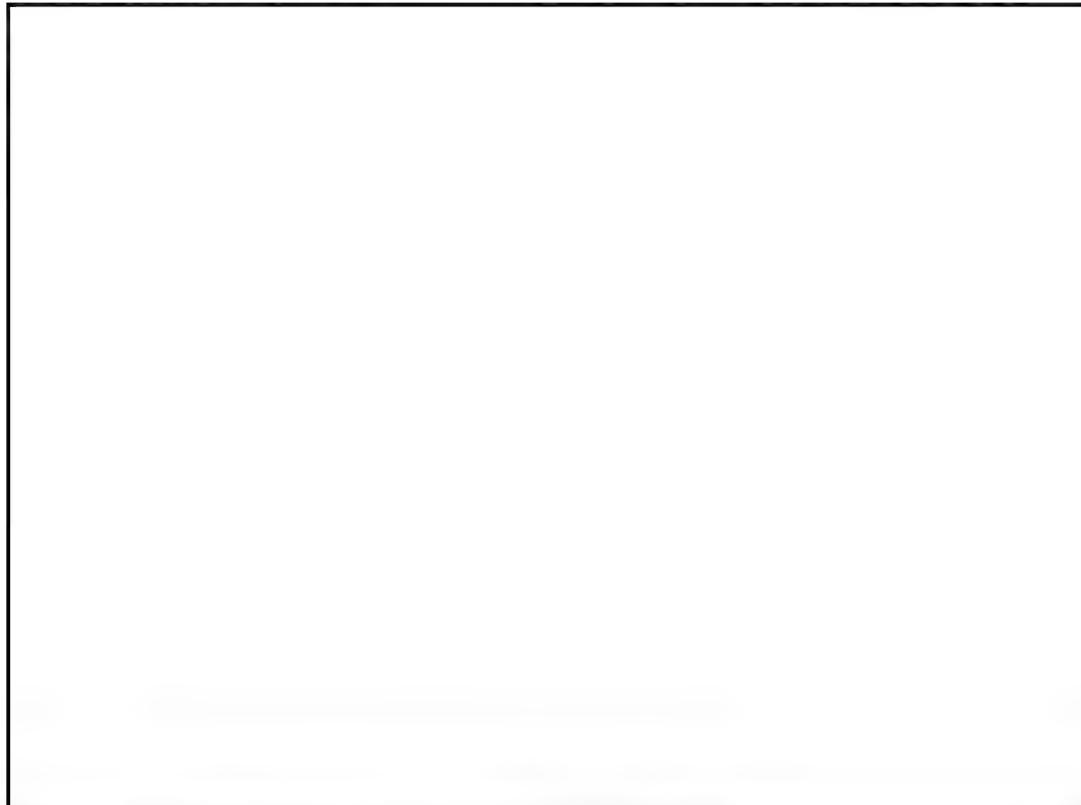


Imported Search Slip



Imported Search Slip

To document your search results, record all findings on the Imported Search Slip within your FDPS case.

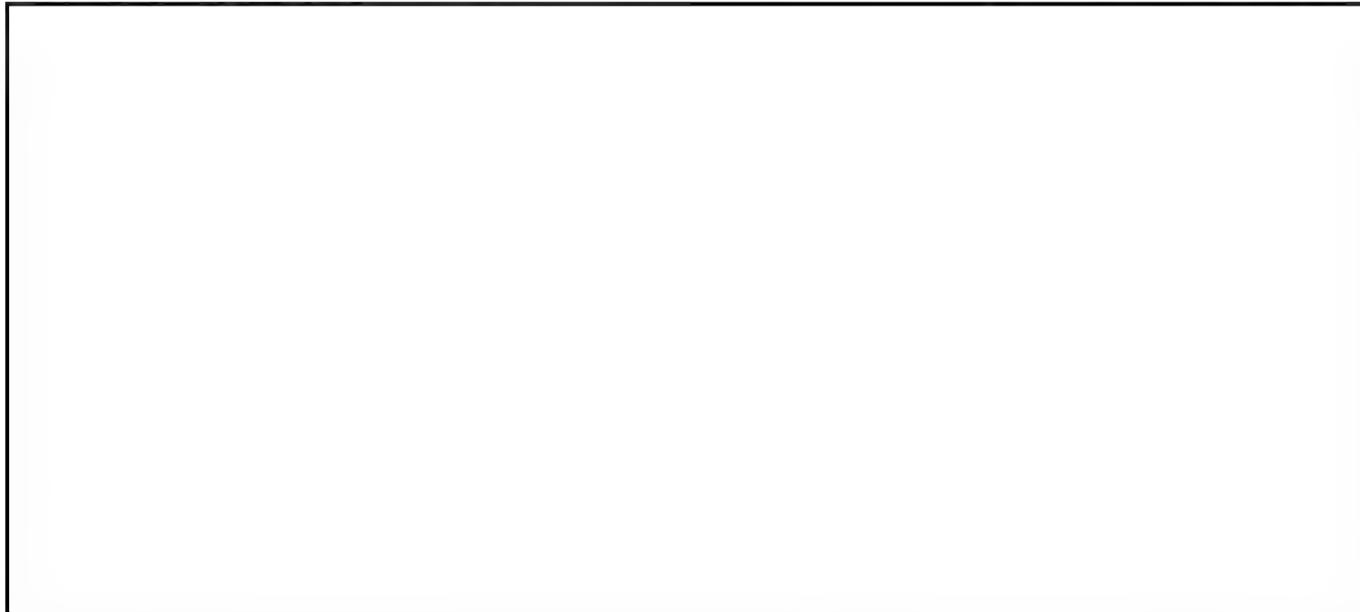


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Imported Search Slip

To view your Imported Search Slip if you've already clicked on the 'Create Search Slip' button, go to the Documents tab of your FDPS case.



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Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

Record files under the 'Search Term(s)' that are entered into the search parameters within each system.

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Even if these files are found under different indexed terms, you will always record the files under the terms you entered so the search can be replicated, if needed.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

The file name should always be listed in the following format:
100-HQ-1234.

If a file is found and is listed in a different format
(i.e., HQ 100-1234), it should be reformatted to reflect the
above.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

If files are located in the search, select FF (files found) in the Disposition column.

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Drop-down one row to type the file number.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

If files are not located in the search for a search term, select NR (no record) in the Disposition column next to the term.



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Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

Select *Pending*, *Closed*, or *Closed-C4 within 5yrs* in the Search File Status drop-down menu for each file listed on the Imported Search Slip.

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If the *Closed-C4 within 5yrs* option is selected, the C-4 Closed Date will need to be added in the next column.

The reason for this will be discussed later on in training.



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Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

Select *Responsive* or *Potential* from the File Disposition drop-down menu for each file listed on the Imported Search Slip.

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Imported Search Slip

Recording Results

If you select *Same Information* in the Search File Status column, the other columns will automatically populate with default information.

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Do not modify any of the information that automatically populates.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Initial Search Requirements

In the *Initial Search Requirements* field on the FOIPA Info tab of the Imported Search Slip, place a 'X' next to Main or Ref or both, indicating what type of search you're conducting.

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Imported Search Slip

Recording Search Time

Record the search times for *each location* searched on the
'FOIPA Info' tab within the Imported Search Slip.

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Imported Search Slip

Recording Ident Field Offices

Record all FOs from ident main, reference, or control files in the

Ident FO(s) field.

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Searching Rules



Searching for Responsive Records

You will be using certain factors from the FOIPA request letter to determine if the records you find are identifiable to the subject of the request.



“IDENT” Factors

Individuals

“IDENT” Factors for Individuals:

Factors which assist in determining whether certain files may be responsive to a given FOIPA request.

- Matching 3-part name (Last Name, First Name, Full Middle Name)
 - Mark as *potential*
- Date of Birth
- Date of Death
- Unique numbers (e.g., Social Security, FBI number, prisoner number, etc.)
- Any other matching information provided in the FOIPA request letter, or found from an ident file during the search, including:
 - Address
 - Family members
 - Profession (could be a potential depending on the type of profession)
 - AKAs
- Matching 2-part name in conjunction with any of the above factors



“IDENT” Factors

Individuals

Potential Files (for individuals)

- A file is not ident based solely on a 3-part name match.
 - These files should be recorded as potentials and ordered; however, should not be considered ident/responsive until scoped.
- Field offices should not be picked up and added to the search based solely on a 3-part name match or a potential file (unless you have reason to believe it's your subject).

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Elimination Factors

Fourteen year age rule

Used to eliminate investigative files pertaining to crimes that we could reasonably expect a child 14 years old and younger would not be the subject/title of the file.

EXEMPTION: File classifications

- 7 Kidnapping; Child Abduction
- 26 Crimes of Violence/Carjacking; Chop Shops; Interstate Transportation of Stolen Aircraft
- 79 Missing Persons
- 87 Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property
- 95 Quantico Lab Files
- 305 Child Pornography

Subjects of any age could be carried as the title of these files



“IDENT” Factors

Organizations and Events

“IDENT” Factors for Organizations/Events:

Factors which assist in determining whether certain files may be responsive to a given FOIPA request.

- ❖ Matching name of organization or title of event
- ❖ Dates specific to organization or event
- ❖ Any other matching information provided in the FOIPA request letter, or found from an ident file during the search, including:
 - Address
 - Members of Organization
 - Attendees/Leaders of Event



“IDENT” Factors

Pay attention to file classifications and AKAs which could assist in identifying a responsive file.

Example:

- A well-known mafia figure in the New York areas has a unique AKA of ‘Horseface Pete’; if you locate a file that reveals this AKA and no other identifying factors, the file should be ordered and scoped for responsiveness.



Searching Rules

Main Files

Recording Main Files

- List ident main files by file number.
 - Pick up Field Offices and Legats.
- Additional Case IDs should be recorded and ordered if the main file is recorded. Field Offices and Legats will be picked up from these files.



Searching Rules

Main Files

Recording Main Files Continued

- If the exact same main file is located elsewhere in the search, record the file as 'Same Information'. In the notes portion of the Imported Search Slip, type the file number.

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Searching Exceptions

Control and Zero Files

Recording Control and Zero Files

Control File Example: (100-HQ-C1234)

Zero File Example: (100-HQ-0)

- Other examples may include single digit file extensions (e.g., -2, -3, -4) or letters (e.g., A, D, R, U, Z)
- Requests seeking Main Files: If the subject is indexed as a main, list the control file number with the corresponding serial(s) and **analyst remove it** from the Imported Search Slip.



Searching Exceptions

Control and Zero Files

Recording Control and Zero Files (Continued)

- *Exception: If the request is specific in nature or the requester is seeking information that would be found within a control file, record the control files and the corresponding serial(s) as **responsive**.
 - Example:

Requester claims he was interviewed by a case agent in the New York Field Office on January 21, 2015.
- Pick up Field Offices and Legats from control/zero files if the file/serial is responsive to the request.



Searching Exceptions

Recording 190 File Classifications

- Requests seeking Main Files: List ident 190 main files by file number and analyst remove the file as “Other” (unless the request is referencing a specific FOIPA).
- Do not pick up Field Offices or Legats.



Searching Exceptions

Recording 197 File Classifications

- Requests seeking Main Files: List ident 197 main files by file number. Analyst remove the file as “Other” after contacting the Office of General Council (OGC) Point of Contact (POC).



Searching Exceptions

Recording File Classifications

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- Requests seeking Main Files: List identify main files by file number. the file as unless the request is referencing a



AKAs

- All AKAs *provided by the requester* will be searched.
- AKAs *located in the search* will not be searched.
 - These AKAs do not need to be recorded on the Imported Search Slip unless directed to do so.
 - If the subject is high profile, the AKAs found within the search *may* need to be searched in order to locate responsive material. In these instances, consult with your Team Lead or Expert Government Information Specialist (EGIS) prior to searching the AKAs.



Conducting New Searches

Previous Search: No Record

Conduct new searches originally resulting in a '**no record**' response, no matter how recent the search.

The new search should only include the timeframe between the original search cut-off date and the starting date of the new search.

If new AKAs are provided by the new requester, those names should be searched without limiting the timeframe.



Conducting New Searches

Previous Search: Files Found

Conduct new searches on subjects originally resulting in '**files found**' if the search is older than two months.

The new search should only include the timeframe between the original search cut-off date and the starting date of the new search.

If new AKAs are provided by the new requester, those names should be searched without limiting the timeframe.



Conducting New Searches

The parameters of the new search (i.e., timeframe searched), should be documented in the note section of the Imported Search Slip.

The search slip from the previous case should be printed and scanned into the new case as a 'Document not be Reviewed'.^{b7E}

Locating
a search
from a
previous
case.

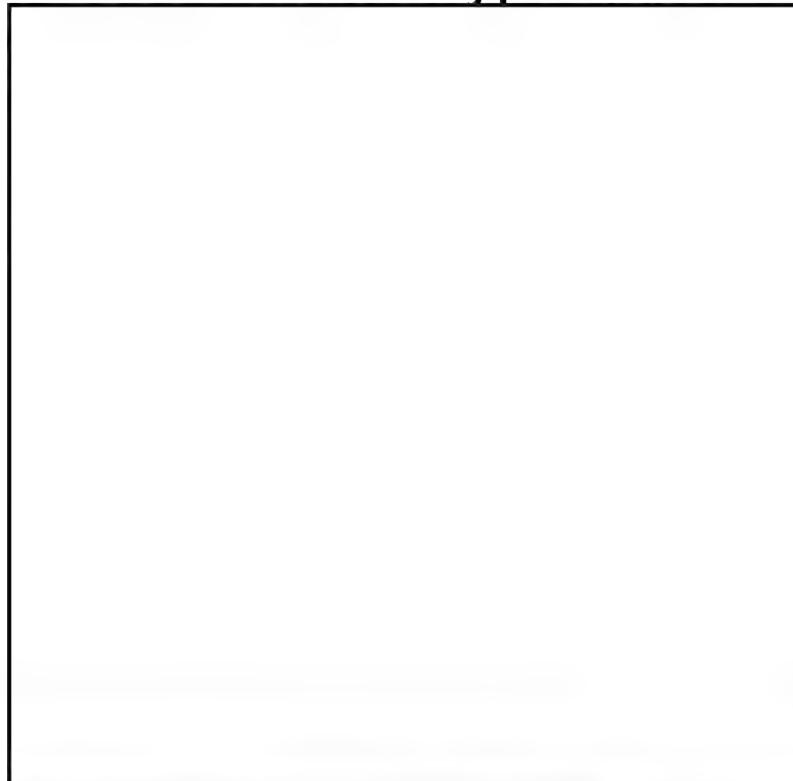


Searching ACS Index



ACS Index Overview

Index records created in ACS-UNI have been migrated into Sentinel. These index records can only be found through accessing the 'ACS Index' hyperlink within Sentinel.



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ACS Index

Searching Dates

An ACS Index search is required for the following:

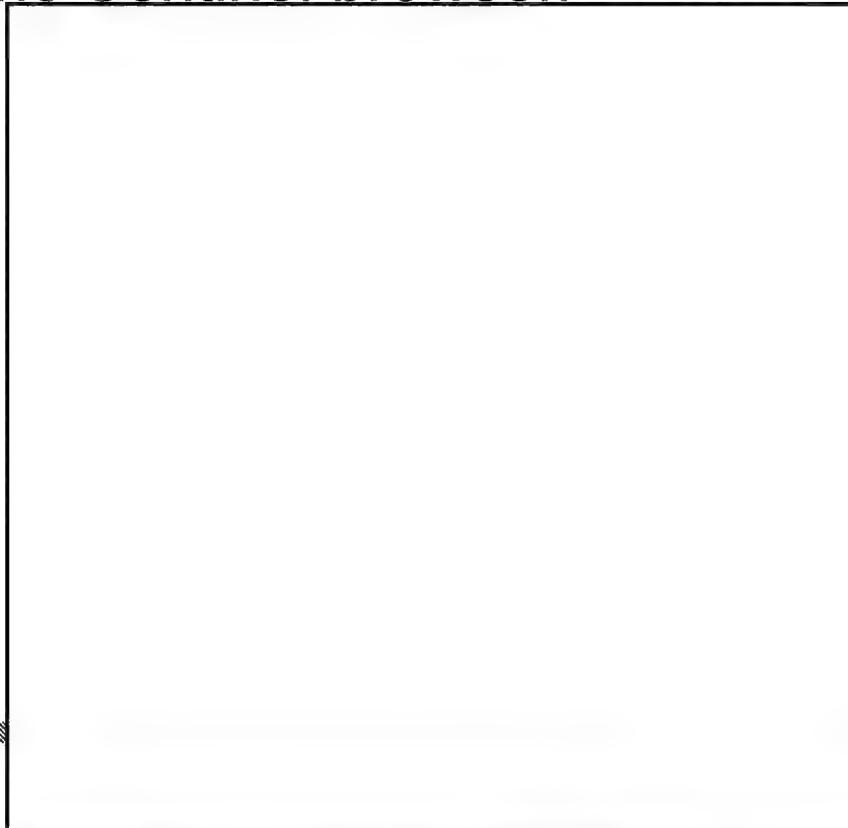
- The individual was born before July 1, 2012; or,
- The event took place or organization was created before July 1, 2012.



ACS Index

Searching

1. Click on the 'ACS Index' hyperlink in the upper left hand corner of the Sentinel browser.



You do not
need to check
the box.



ACS Index Searching

2. Select 'Advanced Search'.
3. The 'ACS Index Advanced Search' window will appear.

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ACS Index

Advanced Search Tabs

All searches should be completed on the 'Name' tab.
The other tabs should not be used.

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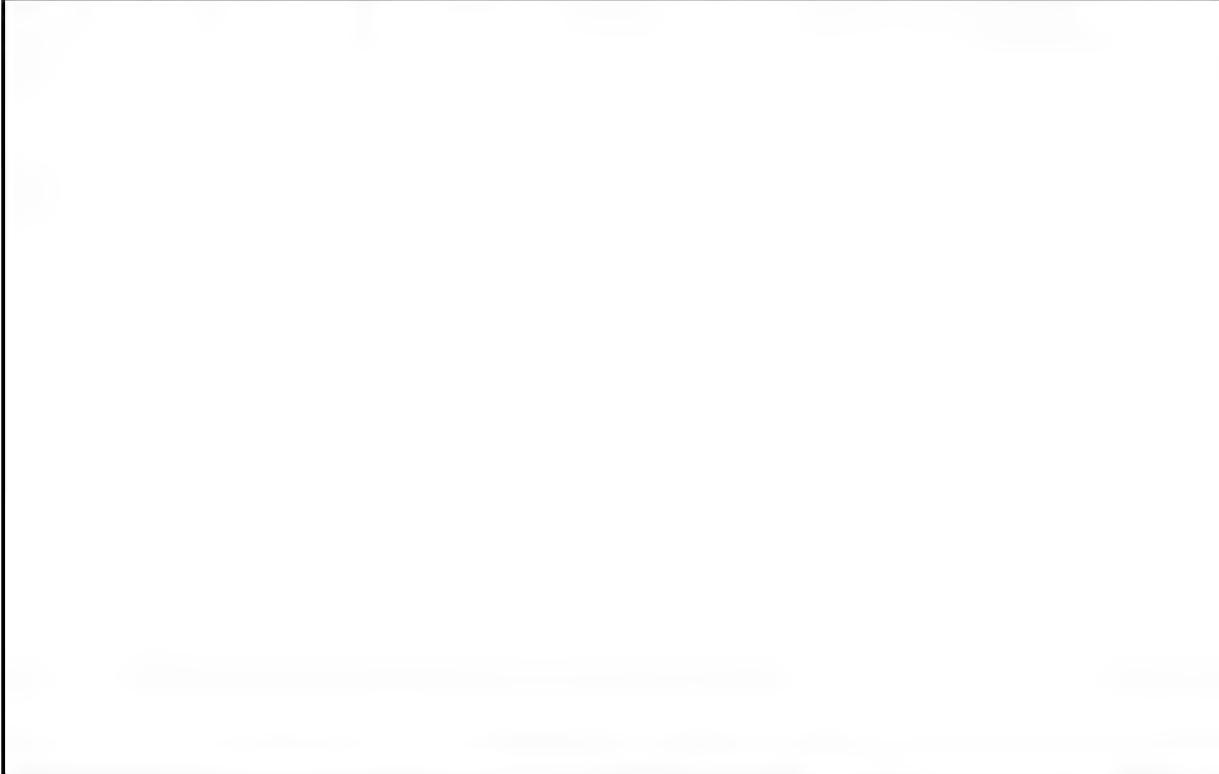


ACS Index

Searching Rules

The only search types available are String Search and String Phonetic Search.

Use the String Search option for every search.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, occupying the central portion of the page below the main text.

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ACS Index

Searching Events or Organizations

Events or Organizations: Enter the subject's *unique term(s)* in the 'Last Name' field (omitting common terms such as corporation, company, management).

[Redacted area]

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ACS Index

Searching Individuals

Individuals: Enter the subject's *first name*, *last name*, and *DOB* in the appropriate fields. The 'Allow Blank' checkbox should always remain checked next to the "Date of Birth" field.

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ACS Index Searching Rules

Reminders:

- Do not search the Middle Name or Middle Initial for individuals. The 'ST' search type will produce all breakdowns of the search term.
- Always enter the DOB, if provided by the requester.



ACS Index

Searching Rules

Punctuation:

- **Do not use punctuation in ACS-Index.**
- Combine and separate hyphenated names.
 - Example: Alice Jane Smith-Allen:

Search (three separate searches):

- First Name: Alice Last Name: SmithAllen
- First Name: Alice Last Name: Smith
- First Name: Alice Last Name: Allen



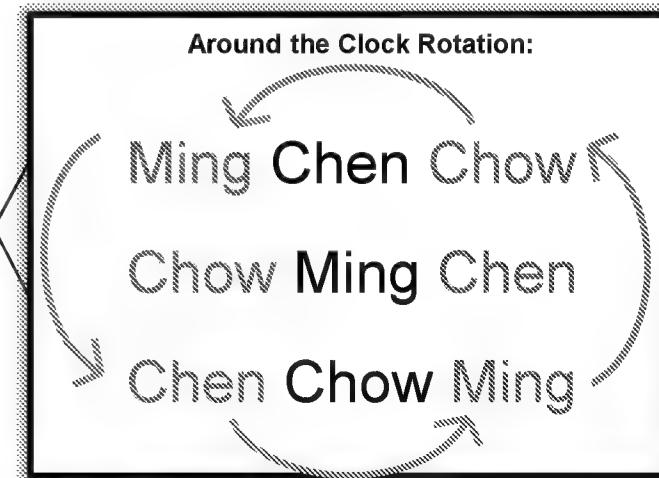
ACS Index Searching Rules

Middle Eastern and Asian Names:

- Manually rotate the name so each part of the name is the surname.
 - Example: Ming Chen Chow

Search (three separate searches):

- First Name: Ming Last Name: Chow
- First Name: Chow Last Name: Chen
- First Name: Chen Last Name: Ming



ACS Index

Searching Rules

Hispanic Names:

- If the Hispanic name includes both the paternal and maternal family names, search each surname as the surname.

- Example: Maria Rosalee Gonzalez Florez

Search (two separate searches):

- First Name: Maria Last Name: Gonzalez
- First Name: Maria Last Name: Florez



ACS Index

Searching Rules

Two Part Last Names:

- If the requester indicates that the subject has two separate last names but no hyphen, the name should be searched using the hyphenated rules.
- This is typically found in eFOIA requests or as a part of a standardized form where the requester placed two last names in the last name field.

eFOIA Examples:

First Name Alexandra

Middle Name Lynn

Last Name McCartney Phillips

First Name Maria

Middle Name

Last Name Gonzalez Florez



ACS Index Searching Rules

Two Part Last Names:

- *Note – Not every Hispanic name should be searched using the hyphenated rules. The analyst needs to consider how the subject's name was formatted on the request letter.
 - Example : Maria Gonzalez Florez

eFOIA Request

First Name	Maria
Middle Name	
Last Name	Gonzalez Florez



Search

(three separate searches):

First Name	Last Name
Maria	Florez
Maria	Gonzalez
Maria	Gonzalezflorez



ACS Index

Searching Rules

Two Part Last Names:

- *Note – Not every Hispanic name should be searched using the hyphenated rules. The analyst needs to consider how the subject's name was formatted on the request letter.
 - Example : Maria Gonzalez Florez

Paper Request

U.S Department of Justice	Certification of Identity	
FORM APPROVED OMB NO 1130-0016 EXPIRES 03-31-17		
<p>Privacy Act Statement. In accordance with 28 CFR Section 16.41(d) personal data sufficient to identify the individual submitting requests by mail under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. Section 552a, is required. The purpose of this solicitation is to ensure that the records of individuals who are the subject of U.S. Department of Justice systems of records are not wrongfully disclosed by the Department. Requests will not be processed if this information is not furnished. False information on this form may subject the requester to criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001 and/or 5 U.S.C. Section 552a(e)(3).</p> <p>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.50 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Suggestions for reducing this burden may be submitted to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Public Use Reports Project (1103-0016), Washington, DC 20585.</p> <p>Full Name of Requester ¹ <u>Maria Gonzalez Florez</u></p>		

Search

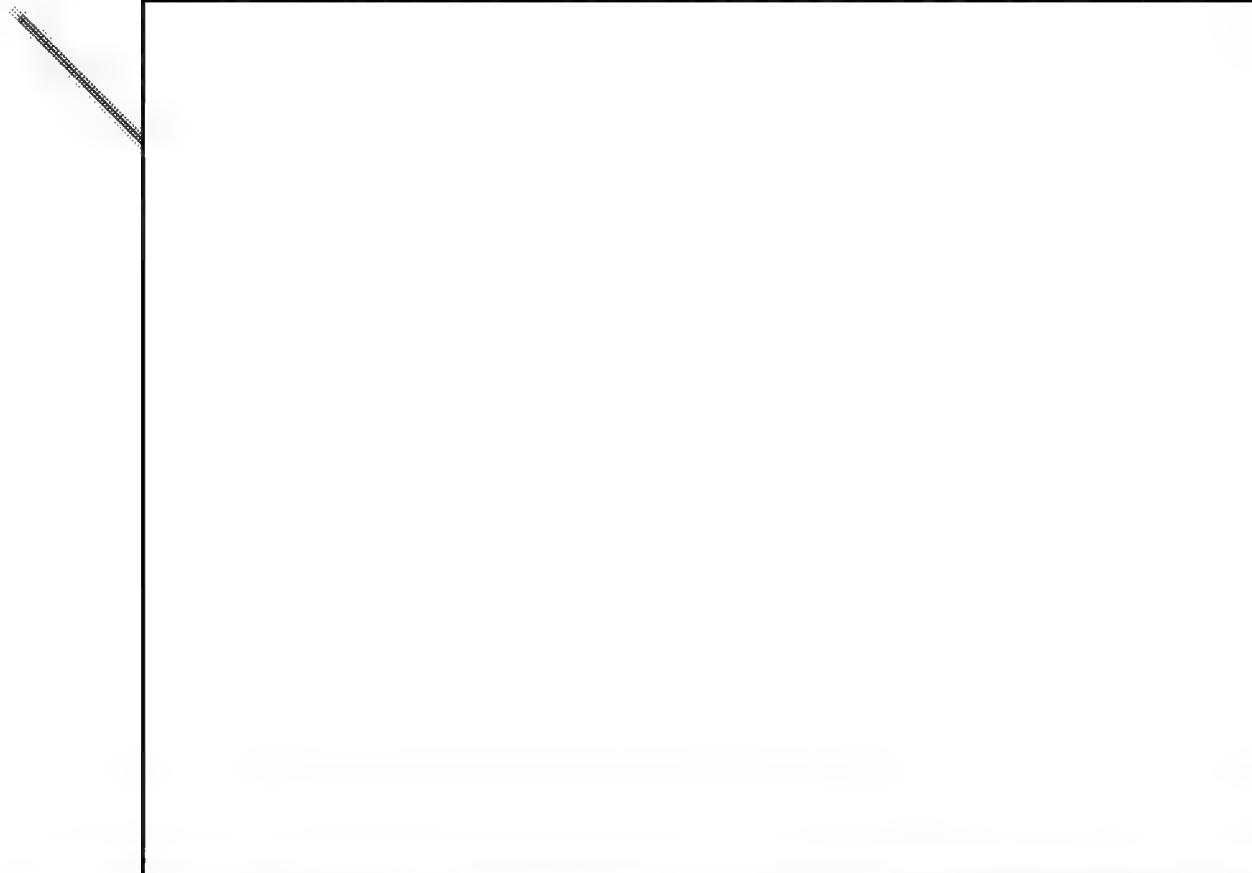
(two separate searches):

First names	Last names
Maria	Florez
Maria	Gonzalez



ACS Index Searching

- After entering the search criteria into the appropriate fields, click 'Search'.



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ACS Index

Search Results

Results will appear. Sort the results by the following criteria:

- **Main File Only Searches:** Sort the results by Main/Ref in ascending order



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ACS Index

Search Results

Select each result to determine if it's responsive by viewing the information in the right-hand panel.



Main File Only Searches: Review all [main](#) entries

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ACS Index

Ident Information

Identifying information can appear in various locations
within the result.



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ACS Index

Additional Case IDs

If there is an additional case ID, it will appear in the 'Additional Case ID' field.



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If this subject is ident, you will have to record 100-HQ-1234 and 100-BA-5678. You will need to list BA as an ident FO on tab 1 of your Imported Search Slip.



ACS Index

Main versus Reference

To see if the subject was indexed as a main versus reference, view the Main/Ref field.

[Redacted content area]

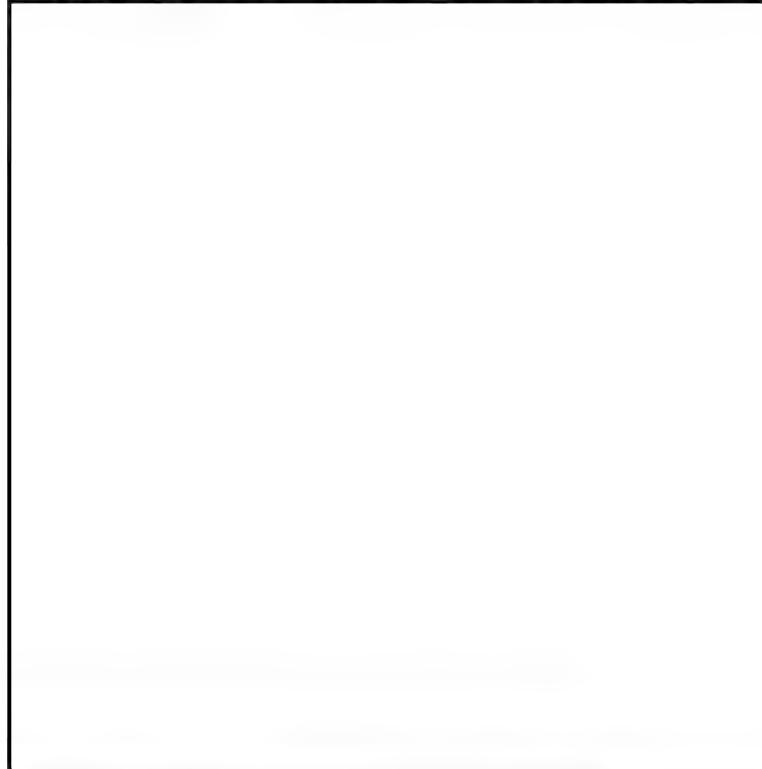
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ACS Index

Open and Closed Dates

Open and closed dates were not migrated into ACS Index. To view the status of a file, type the file number into the Sentinel 'Find a case or serial...' search toolbar and push enter.



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ACS Index

Open and Closed Dates

A new tab will open. You can view the case information within the Case Information Overview (e.g., closing date and closing code).



ACS Index

Searching Subjects with a Timeframe

If the requester provides a timeframe to search as part of the subject, list all ident files according to the searching rules.

To view the open and closed dates, look up each ident main file (and ident reference file[s] when specifically requested) within Sentinel.

If the file doesn't fall within the requested timeframe, the file should be analyst removed on the Imported Search Slip as 'Out of Date Range'.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results in ACS Index

Record all appropriate files under the search term(s) that were entered into the 'ACS Index Advanced Search' box.

For individuals, use the following format: *LastName,*
FirstName

The Index should reflect ACS and the search type should reflect ST.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results in ACS Index

Example 1 (Hyphenated Name – Three Separate Searches):

[Redacted content area]

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Example 2:

[Redacted content area]

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ACS Index

Practice

Search the following subjects in ACS Index:

1.

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DOB:

2.

Relativity Records Incorporated



Located in New York



Searching Sentinel-Entities



Sentinel Searching

All Sentinel searches should be conducted through the
'Advanced Search' function.

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Sentinel

New Search Dates

An **entity** is a subject that was indexed within a record in Sentinel. An 'Entities' search includes all of the indexed Sentinel entity records.

A Sentinel advanced search of **Entities** is required for the following:

- The individual was alive on or after July 1, 2012; *or*,
- The event took place or organization was created after July 1, 2012.



Sentinel

New Search Dates

Consult with your Team Lead or Expert Government Information Specialist (EGIS) for further guidance on the direction of a potential additional search if the:

- requested information was not found in an entities search, *and*,
- there is reason to believe the FBI should have an investigation on the subject. This could be based on information provided in the FOIPA request letter OR if the investigation is widely known by the general public.



Sentinel-Entities

Searching Events or Organizations

Events or Organizations: Enter the subject's *unique term(s)* (omitting common terms such as company) into the 'Search Text' field of the Entities tab *with quotations*.

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The 'Entity Type' should reflect *Organization* or



Sentinel-Entities

Searching Individuals

Individuals: Enter the subject's name into the 'Search Text' field of the Entity tab using the following format:

“FirstName LastName”^3

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See next slides for additional criteria.



Sentinel-Entities

Searching Individuals

If the individual has a four part name or longer, the number (after tilde) should be edited to correspond with the number of names.

Example: Allison Ann McKenzie Smith

➤ Search: “Allison Smith”~4

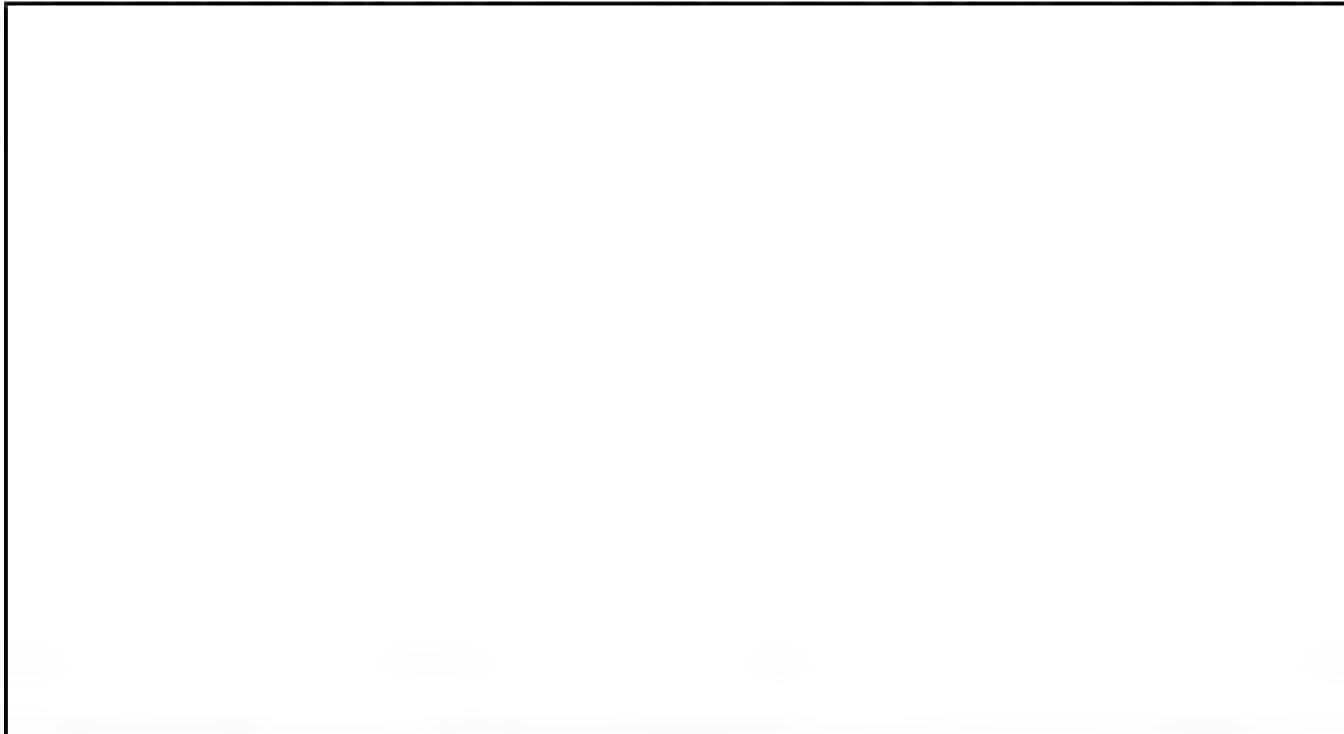


Sentinel-Entities

Searching Individuals

The *Role in Case* should reflect:

- **Main File Only Searches:** Main/Complainant/Victim



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Sentinel-Entities

Searching Individuals

Always add the *exact DOB* if provided by the requester.



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Sentinel-Entities

Searching Rules

- **Punctuation can be used within Sentinel Advanced Searches. If the search term contains punctuation, search **with and without** the punctuation.**
- Combine and separate hyphenated names. The name should also be searched with the hyphen.
 - Example: Alice Jane Smith-Allen:

Search (four separate searches):

- “Alice SmithAllen”~4
- “Alice Smith-Allen”~4
- “Alice Smith”~4
- “Alice Allen”~4



Sentinel-Entities

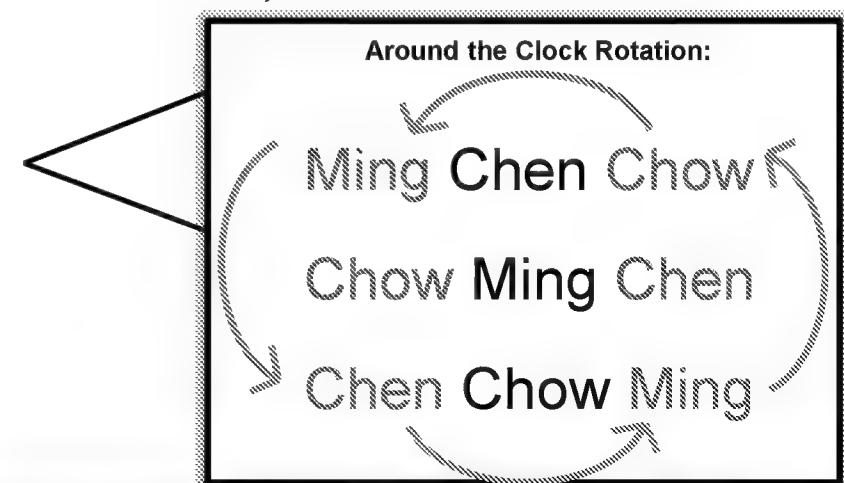
Searching Rules

Middle Eastern and Asian Names:

- Manually rotate the name so each part of the name is the surname.
 - Example: Ming Chen Chow

Search (three separate searches):

- “Ming Chow”~3
- “Chow Chen”~3
- “Chen Ming”~3



Sentinel-Entities

Searching Rules

Hispanic Names:

- If the Hispanic name includes both the paternal and maternal family names, search each surname as the surname.
 - Example: Maria Rosalee Gonzalez Florez
Search (two separate searches):
 - “Maria Florez”~4
 - “Maria Gonzalez”~4



Sentinel-Entities

Searching Rules

Two Part Last Names:

- If it is clear that part of the subject's name has two separate names but no hyphen, the name should be searched using the hyphenated rules.
- This is typically found in eFOIPA requests where the requester placed two last names in the last name field.

First Name: Alice Middle Name: Jane Last Name: Smith

Allen

Search (three separate searches):

- “Alice SmithAllen”~4
- “Alice Smith”~4



Sentinel-Entities

Search Results

After entering the search criteria within the Entity tab and clicking the 'Search' button, entity results will appear.

Select each entity to determine if it is responsive to the request.



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Sentinel-Entities

Search Results Fields

You can customize the results fields by clicking on the 'Fields' drop down.



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Sentinel-Entities

Saving Searches

If you want to save a search and the criteria used to perform the search, click on \equiv within the search results and select 'Save'.

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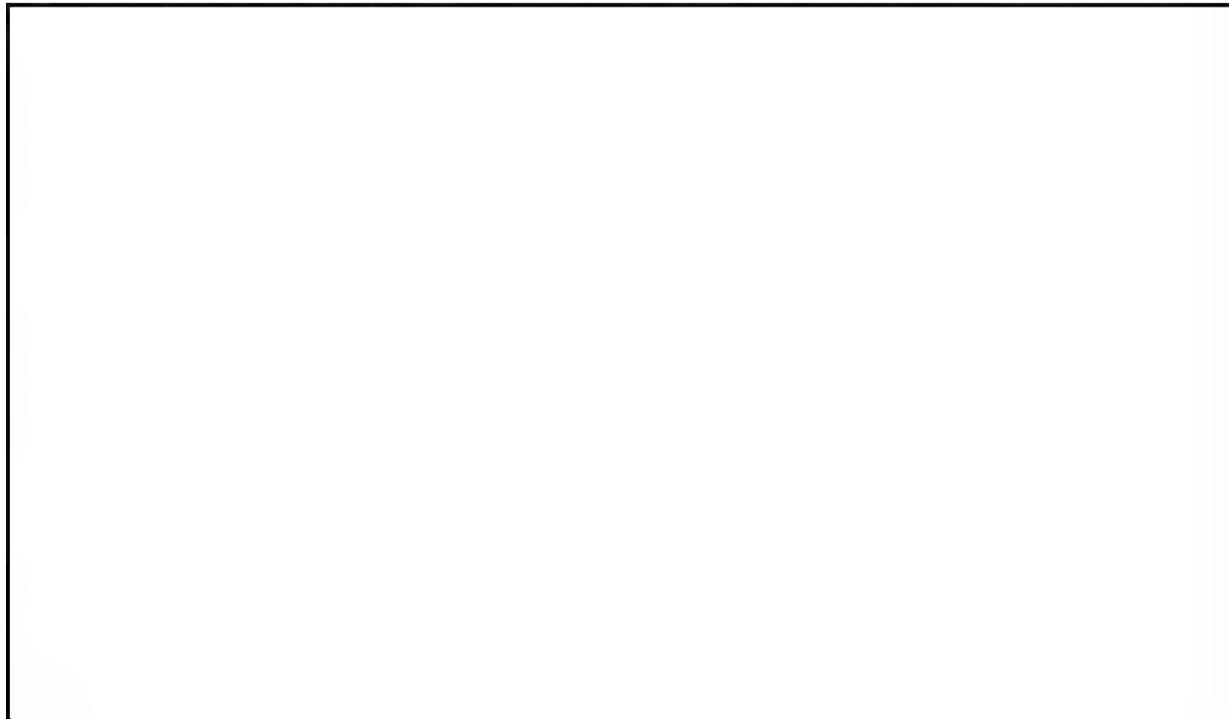
The saved search can be accessed under the 'Saved Searches' folder on the left hand side of the Sentinel screen.



Sentinel-Entities

Sorting Search Results

You can also sort the results by clicking on the 'Sort' drop down.



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Sentinel-Entities

Search Results

Select 'Summary View' to view the identifying information within each entity.

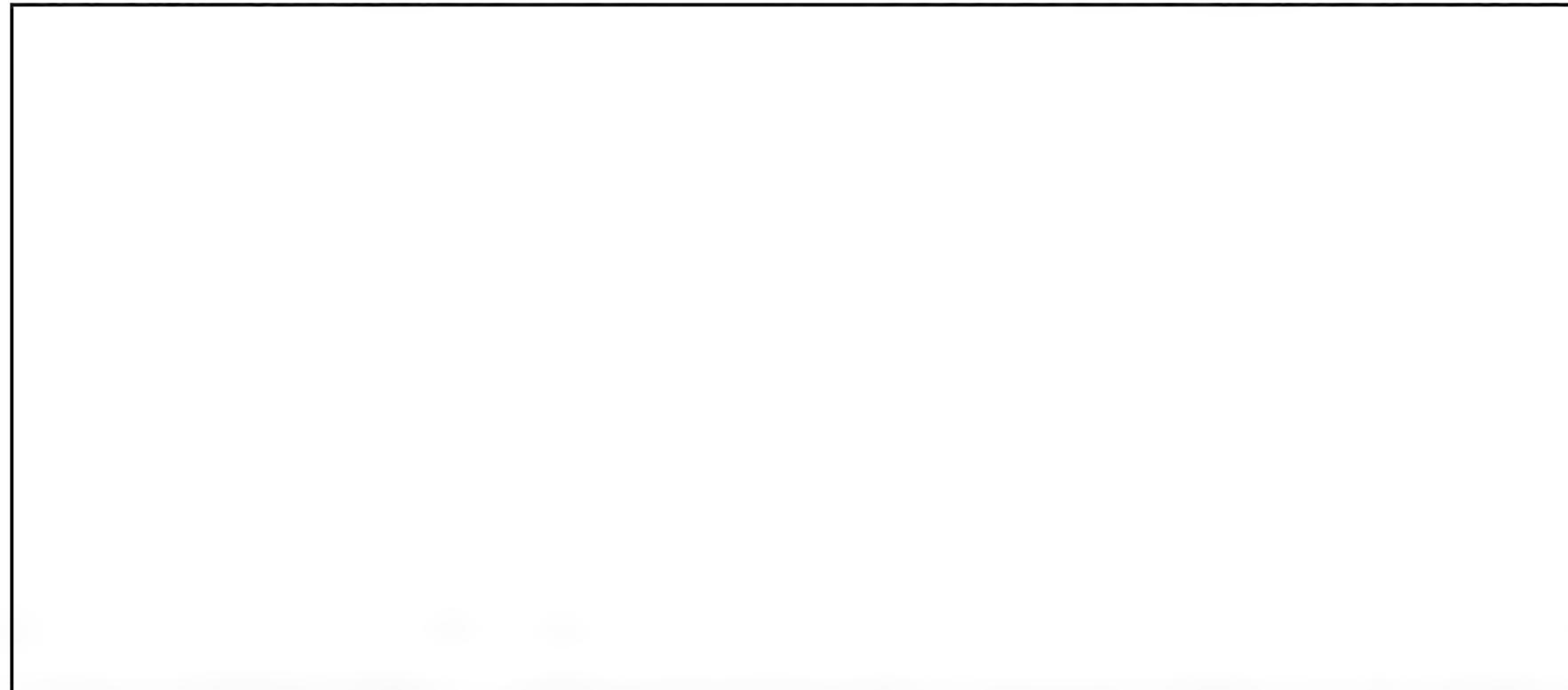
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Sentinel-Entities

Search Results

To view the files attached to an entity and to verify if the subject is a main or reference within a file, select the Cases button. ^{b7E}



Sentinel-Entities

Main, Reference, Complainant, or Victim

A subject can be indexed as a Main, Reference, Complainant, or Victim.

If the subject is indexed as a Complainant or Victim, view the Case Title. If the subject's name is listed in the Case Title, treat the file as a main.

- If it is determined the subject is a reference through scoping, the file should be analyst removed on the Imported Search Slip.



Sentinel-Entities

Viewing the Case Title

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Sentinel-Entities

Searching Subjects with a Timeframe

If the requester provides a timeframe to search as part of the subject, list all ident files according to the searching rules.

Look up each ident main file within Sentinel to view the open and closed dates.

If the file doesn't fall within the requested timeframe, the file should be analyst removed on the Imported Search Slip as 'Out of Date Range'.



Imported Search Slip

Recording Results in Sentinel

Record all appropriate files under the exact search term(s) that were entered into the 'Search Text' field.

The Index should reflect **Sentinel** and the search type should reflect **N/A**.

b7E

Search Term



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Viewing Recent Sentinel Searches

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To view recent Sentinel-Entities searches, click on the Sentinel hyperlink at the top left hand side of the screen.



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Sentinel

Practice Searches

Search the following subjects in Sentinel-Entities:

1.

b6
b7C

➤ DOB:

2.

b7E

➤



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